Notes from Upper Rio Grande Basin Water Operations Review Interdisciplinary NEPA Team Meeting; November 8, 2001; 1:00 PM; Corps of Engineers Conference Room, Albuquerque

In attendance:

Carolyn Brumfield, Corps
Lawrence Cata, Pueblo of San Juan
Art Coykendall, USBR
Ellen Dietrich, SAIC/Corps
Richard Fike, Corps
Donald Gallegos, Corps
Susan Goodan, SAIC/Corps
Rhea Graham, NMISC
Rob Leutheuser
Mike Marcus, SWCA/NMISC
Nic Medley, NMGF
Claudia Oakes, SWCA/NMISC
Dennis Oyenque, Pueblo of San Juan
Pam Ramos, R.F. Weston/Corps
Gary Rutherford, Corps
Rolf Schmidt-Petersen, NMISC
Gail Stockton, Corps

- Rolf Schmidt-Petersen gave a slide presentation entitled "San Acacia South Surface Water-Groundwater Characterization Program—A Joint USACE/NMISC Collaborative Data Gathering and Modeling Analysis Project". A summary of the presentation and questions discussed is provided below. The project area is the same as Reach 14 for the Water Operations Review.
  - The project was initiated over one year ago and is expected to be funded partially through cost-sharing with the Corps under the federal Water Resources Development Act. Its purpose is to support watershed planning under the constraints imposed by the Endangered Species Act, the Rio Grande Compact, and New Mexico law.
  - The project will address fundamental data, such as stream sediment levels, hydraulic condition, groundwater and surface water connectivity, evapotranspiration, and reservoir and streambank capacity, and build upon other studies.
  - Fiscal year 2002 activities will include development of a linked groundwater/surface water model, installation of wells and gages in selected channels, aquifer testing, and monitoring of chemical composition and temperature to determine the relationship between groundwater and surface water.
  - Fieldwork will be conducted in fiscal years 2002 and 2003 and will be used to refine the groundwater/surface water model.
  - Well locations and land use data will be digitized and could be made available for GIS use by the Water Operations Review.
  - **Question:** What types of data will be collected on overbank flows? Staff and stream gages will be monitored as pulses move through. In addition, if conditions warrant they may work with other groups in the area to mark highwater points.
  - **Question:** Will Cliff Crawford's work on shallow groundwater be used?. No, the BEMP site is north of the study area.

- **Question:** When the monitoring wells are installed, will core samples and information on stratigraphy be collected? They are considering the use of drilling equipment that would collect one continuous 4-inch core per cross-section. They hope to refine the groundwater elevation maps in the floodplain.

❖ Follow-up on Alternatives Development Workshop

- The Project Managers received positive comments on using a facilitator for the workshop.
- **Workshop follow-up information will be posted on Team Link with a note on the message board.**
- **If more time is needed for meetings with the support and resource teams, team members should notify the Project Managers**, who will schedule time at an ID NEPA Team meeting or other meeting, as appropriate.
- If technical teams would like to use the Albuquerque NMISC offices for meetings, they can schedule the room with Linda Tenorio at 841-9494.

❖ Technical Team updates

- Riparian and Wetlands—Art Coykendall
  - The team met with the Aquatic Systems Technical Team on November 7 and discussed data needs. They agreed to determine the range of flow alternatives to be evaluated for the Low Flow Conveyance Channel.
  - The teams decided that they need clarification on how Jemez Canyon Dam operations affect sediment in the mainstem.
- Cultural Resources—Dennis Oyenque
  - The team leaders, Dennis and Neal Ackerly, have been working to coordinate and consult with tribes. Their focus now is to complete the meetings introducing the tribal councils to the Water Operations Review Project Managers, Cultural Resources Technical Team leaders, and the overall project. They hope to educate the tribes and increase their communications with the agencies.
  - This team will convey questions from the other technical teams to the tribes.
- Land Use, Socioeconomics, Environmental Justice, Recreation, Agriculture—Gary Rutherford, Susan Goodan
  - The breakout sessions at the workshop were very helpful. The team was able to discuss mutual concerns and issues with the Water Quality Technical Team.
- Water Quality—Mike Marcus
  - The team has made progress in writing the Affected Environment draft section.
  - They are approximately 95% done with the compilation of water quality data into a database, and have developed maps to show the locations of the data.
  - The bibliography of references assembled by the team has been posted as an Excel spreadsheet on Team Link under Project Information, Water Quality Technical Team, Documents. The team hopes that other technical team members will find it useful and send additions to Scott Anderholm for incorporation into the database.

- Hydrology and Hydraulics—Carolyn Brumfield
  - After meeting with the technical teams at the workshop, Carolyn recommends that the team model low, medium, and high flows, in addition to specific flows identified by technical teams for each alternative.
  - Carolyn offered to distribute her notes on data and model needs that she gathered from the resource teams at the workshop.
- GIS—Ellen Dietrich
  - The team had some useful meetings with several of the resource teams at the workshop, resulting in team members continuing to seek needed GIS data for analysis.
  - At their monthly meetings, the team members frequently discuss how to further the integration of data from many of the resource and other support teams. They use this as a way to determine data needs for various teams, and to identify possible problems with future data integration.
  - **If technical teams need the assistance from the GIS team members, they should invite their assigned GIS Technical Team representative to attend a team meeting.**
- Aquatic Systems—Rick Fike
  - The team is working on assembling a bibliography.
  - The contract for developing the aquatic habitat model has been awarded. The team is still selecting some of the sites for data collection and would like to coordinate with other teams that need field data.
- URGWOM Integration/Water Operations—Don Gallegos
  - Don has found that the technical teams are learning what can and cannot be achieved in the river system through water operations.
  - **Don will post the protocols and procedures for monitoring and for providing designated flows at specific locations on Team Link.**
  - **Don requested the selection of a co-team leader or a new team leader to manage the workload required for meeting with the resource teams.**
  - **There will not be a Water Operations Team meeting in December.**

- Project Managers update
  - The Planning Aid Letter and bibliography of riparian and aquatic references has been received from the USFWS. It has been posted on Team Link under Project Information, Project Managers, Documents.
  - The completed action alternatives are estimated to be finalized approximately 6 to 8 months from now, which will take into consideration input from the optional public meetings scheduled during January through May, 2002.

- **The Project Managers would like to know if technical teams need displays for the public meetings to be held from January through May.** The displays used for the public scoping meetings could be updated to convey technical team activities over the last year. The purpose of the public meetings is to:
  - Provide information to assist in screening the alternatives.
  - Provide a status report to the public.
  - Generate publicity for the Water Operations Review.
- A rough version of FLO-2D will be ready for use next month. Its initial runs will be used to generate a map of the area of potential impact between Cochiti to Isleta.

❖ **The next Interdisciplinary NEPA Team meeting will be held on December 13 at 1:00 p.m. at the Corps conference room.**

❖ **The Steering Committee will meet December 6 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Room 119 at the Corps. The technical teams are invited to have a representative present.**